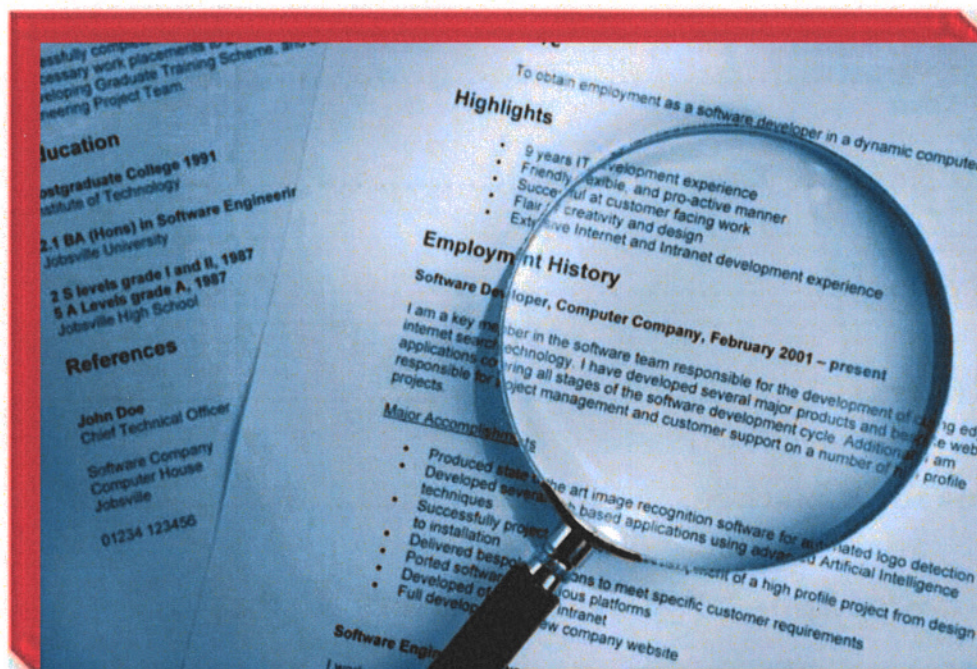


Résumé and Cover Letter Guide



Idaho Department of Labor
2018

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RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

WRITING A RÉSUMÉ

This guide will assist you in writing a résumé that will get the employer's attention. It provides examples of résumés and cover letters and offers you information about:

- How to create an "attention-grabbing" résumé
- How to select the most appropriate format
- How to create information to "hook" the employer

Writing a great résumé does not necessarily mean you should follow the rules you hear through the grapevine. Résumés do not always have to be one page or follow a specific format. Every résumé is a one-of-a-kind marketing tool. It should be appropriate to your situation and do exactly what you want it to do. This guide will provide the basic principles of writing a highly effective résumé. For additional assistance, contact your local Department of Labor office.

WHY HAVE A RÉSUMÉ

A résumé is used to highlight your skills, knowledge, accomplishments and experiences. It demonstrates to an employer your ability to perform the job.

YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé is a representation of who you are on a piece of paper. It is the first impression a company, hiring manager, human resource personnel, recruiter or future boss will have of you. The sole purpose of the résumé is to get you an interview.

BUILDING YOUR RÉSUMÉ – HOW TO START

Your résumé should contain the following:

Header: Also known as the masthead, it goes at the top of your résumé and contains your name, address, phone number and email address.

Objective: This is the exact title of the job you are applying for. (This is optional)

Summary of Qualifications: This is a summary of your skills.

Work History / Professional Experience: It includes the positions you held, your dates of employment, the companies you worked for and the city and state where each company was located. Most importantly, you will start each statement with an action verb to describe what you did.

Education: A list of all your education and professional training or development seminars.

Above all, you must use keywords throughout the résumé and include any additional important information that will make it more personalized and powerful.

PRESENTATION MATTERS

While the content is always the most important part of your résumé, the presentation is a close second. Your résumé is your ticket to the next step in the hiring process. A recruiter or a hiring manager **spends an average of just six seconds** looking at your résumé so you must get their attention in that time.

How do you ensure you catch the attention of a hiring manager?

- Decide which type of résumé will fit you best: chronological or functional (see samples).
- Tailor your résumé specifically to the position you are applying for. Keep information relevant.
- Keep your résumé organized and easy to read. Use clear headings and concise information.
- Maintain an order of content – objective, summary of qualifications, work experience, education.

USING RÉSUMÉ TEMPLATES

A good résumé template may help you streamline your résumé and keep it organized and professional without taking up much of your time. It allows you to focus on the actual content and helps in searching for your next job. It helps you add personality, stay structured and consistent and present your experience in a chronological, easy-to-read manner. However, avoid making your résumé look generic or like a standard template. It will not make you stand out from all the other résumés the employer will be receiving.

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DO'S AND DON'TS FOR WRITING A RÉSUMÉ

Following these “do’s” and “don’ts” will increase your chances for being scheduled for an interview.

DO'S	DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tailor your résumé to each job. Make it relevant• Create a professional appearance• Understand attention spans (six to 15 seconds)• Make it interesting to read• Address all requirements in the job description• Highlight accomplishments, not functions• Use action words• Demonstrate how you solved problems• Identify results/accomplishments of your work• Quantify results where possible• Use industry terminology when appropriate• Include volunteer experience• Put education at the bottom of the page• Proofread for errors• Leave off “References Available Upon Request”• Keep references/salary history on separate page	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't use a “generic” résumé• Don't send a poorly written résumé• Don't use a résumé that takes too long to scan• Don't include personal interests• Don't create an “untargeted” work history• Don't focus on what you were supposed to do• Don't use the word “responsibility” or “duties”• Don't write in broad generalities• Don't describe what you did in general terms• Don't speak in general terms• Don't leave out any appropriate key language• Don't include irrelevant volunteer information• Don't leave off your educational level• Don't send a résumé without a second opinion• Don't provide references until requested• Don't include references/salary with a résumé

FORMATTING THE RÉSUMÉ

- Start with a list of everything you have done within the past 10 to 15 years that is relevant to your job search including your work history, education and accomplishments.
- Attempt to keep your résumé to one page. There are some circumstances that may require a two page résumé. If you have extensive experience and accomplishments you cannot fit onto one page or the position has extensive requirements, it may require two pages.
- Be cautious when using preformatted résumé templates. Many are dated and some are preformatted using a format that makes it difficult to make adjustments and revisions.
- Don't get crazy with creative fonts. Stick to standard fonts that are easier to read and will scan well (Times New Roman, Arial, Courier or Calibri).
- Use white space between statements for ease of reading (3 point spacing suggested).
- Make margins (top, bottom, left and right) at least 0.7 inches but not more than 1 inch.
- Start with 11-point font. If you have more information to present than fits, decrease font size, but do not go smaller than 10 point. Make your name stand out. Use a slightly larger font (14 point) and make your name bold to stand out on the page.
- Align your name and contact information on left side of résumé. Contact information should include your name, city and state, phone number, email address and LinkedIn address if you have one.
- Organize information under category headings. These can include Objective, Professional Highlights, Education, Training, Skills, Professional Associations and Organizations and Honors and Awards.
- Use bulleted statements to present information. Statements do not need to be written in perfect sentence style. Never use the word “I” in your résumé, and limit it in the cover letter. Start each statement in your work history with a relevant accomplishment and begin with a past tense verb.
- Dates matter. Many employers prefer months and years, but listing only years can also be acceptable.

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CONTENT OF THE RÉSUMÉ

- Research the company. Know what information will impress the employer.
- Address minimum and preferred requirements. Focus specifically on what is in the job description.
- Use industry terminology when appropriate.
- Start each work-experience statement with an action verb.
- Quantify accomplishments when possible. Use numbers and percentages when appropriate.
- Include volunteer experience, languages, internships and other accomplishments, but only if they relate to your ability to perform the job.

FINALIZING THE RÉSUMÉ

- Maintain a neat and clean appearance.
- Proofread it for errors. Have someone else check your résumé for errors as well.
- Ensure you have addressed as much as you can about how your skills match the employer's needs.
- Ask yourself, "Would I interview me?"

WAYS TO MAKE YOUR RÉSUMÉ EASY TO SKIM

1. Don't center any of your text.

Headings should be aligned to the left. This improves readability because the eye naturally returns to the left margin once it is ready to move onto the next line of the text.

2. Align your dates and location.

Only so much information can fit on one line. To help separate your information, you can place the job title and dates on one line and the name of the company, city and state on a line below.

Job Title, month-year to month-year

Company name, city, state

3. Don't justify, or align, both the left and right margins.

Avoid using justified setting for bulleted statements. This leaves uneven gaps between words that can make text harder to read. So for your statements and résumé overall, stick with left alignment.

4. Keep everything the same size font.

Aside from your name and individual headings, which can be larger, the text throughout your résumé should be the same size to ensure readability.

5. Bold your job titles.

Bolding of selected words or phrases helps with visual scanning. Having job titles bolded makes it easier for the reader to see the jobs you have held and the upward movement in your career.

6. Maximize the first five words of your bulleted statements.

An employer is likely to read only the first few words of the bulleted statement. This means the first five words of your bulleted statements are much more important than the rest.

7. Keep bulleted statements to two lines or less.

Even if your first few words are the most interesting thing the employer has ever read, going over two lines per bulleted statement is pushing it.

8. Use digits when writing numbers.

Using numbers in bulleted statements to quantify results helps the employer better understand the scope of your work. Use digits such as 30% rather than thirty percent. It improves readability.

9. Consider using a separate "Summary of Skills" section.

Listing all your **relevant** skills in one section can ensure the employer sees them. However, it is still important to highlight your skills in the body of your résumé.

10. Try to have white space left over.

Having some breathing room on your résumé helps the employer more easily skim it.

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

RÉSUMÉ FORMAT STYLES

Résumés can be created using different formats, different styles and with different focuses depending on your needs. However, no matter what format is selected, every résumé needs to be targeted to the position you apply for. This means it must show how you meet the needs of the employer.

There are primarily two résumé formats – chronological and functional. Both are equally effective although the chronological format is the most common. A third, the master résumé format, is a document that covers your total work history regardless of how far back the employment dates go

FORMAT	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	BEST USED FOR
MASTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive history of employment, skills, training, education and accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For your eyes only (but is never sent out) Used to copy and paste into targeted résumé
CHRONOLOGICAL (EMPLOYMENT-BASED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most widely used format Targets accomplishments to employer's needs Logical flow, easy to read Showcases growth in skills and responsibility Shows promotions and impressive titles Shows loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes gaps in employment Highlights frequent job changes Emphasizes employment but not skill development Emphasizes lack of related experience and career changes Points out demotions/ career setbacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with steady work record Individuals with experience that relates directly to the position applied for Individuals pursuing the same or similar work as they have had in the past
FUNCTIONAL (SKILLS-BASED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights relevant skills and accomplishments De-emphasizes work history in less relevant jobs Combines skills from a variety of jobs Minimizes drawbacks, employment gaps and absence of directly related experiences Emphasizes skills not employment Organizes variety of experience (paid and unpaid, other activities) Disguises gaps in work record or series of short term jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusing if not well organized Requires more effort and creativity to prepare De-emphasizes growth/ job titles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career changers or those in transition Individuals re-entering the job market after some absence Individuals who have grown in skills and responsibility Individuals with gaps in employment Frequent job changes Individuals who have developed skills from other than employment

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

ACTION VERBS FOR RÉSUMÉS

An effective résumé must be action/achievement oriented. This means all statements describing what you have done need to start with an action verb. Below is list of action verbs.

Achieved	Directed	Initiated	Prepared
Acquired	Discovered		Presided
Adjusted	Displayed	Inspected	Procured
Administrated	Doubled	Inspired	Produced
Advised	Earned	Installed	Programmed
Analyzed	Educated	Instructed	Promoted
Applied	Effected	Insured	Prompted
Arranged	Employed	Integrated	Proposed
Assembled	Enacted	Intensified	Proved
Assisted	Encouraged	Interpreted	Provided
Attained	Engineered	Interviewed	Recommended
Budgeted	Established	Invented	Reduced
Built	Estimated	Justified	Regulated
Chaired	Evaluated	Keynoted	Related
Clarified	Executed	Led	Reorganized
Commanded	Exhibited	Licensed	Reported
Compared	Expanded	Located	Researched
Composed	Expedited	Maintained	Reviewed
Conceived	Facilitated	Managed	Revised
Conducted	Financed	Manufactured	Satisfied
Constructed	Forecasted	Mastered	Scheduled
Consulted	Formalized	Mediated	Secured
Contributed	Formed	Motivated	Served
Controlled	Formulated	Negotiated	Serviced
Converted	Founded	Nominated	Solved
Coordinated	Functioned	Obtained	Stimulated
Correlated	Generated	Officiated	Structured
Counseled	Governed	Operated	Supervised
Created	Graduated	Ordered	Succeeded
Decided	Halved	Organized	Summarized
Defined	Handled	Originated	Trained
Delegated	Headed	Participated	Transferred
Demonstrated	Identified	Perfected	Transformed
Designed	Implemented	Performed	Unified
Detained	Improvised	Persuaded	Updated
Determined	Increased	Pioneered	Verified
Developed	Induced	Placed	Won

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ADVERBS/ADJECTIVES FOR RÉSUMÉS

Words to Describe Who You Are and How You Do Things

Accurate	Driving	Instrumental	Respected
Acuity	Dynamic	Leading	Responsible
Adept	Easily	Lifelong	Sensitive
Artful	Effectively	Mastery	Significant
Aware	Exceptional	Natural	Sophisticated
Broad	Expert	New	Strongly
Calm	Experienced	Objective	Successful
Challenging	Extensively	Open-Minded	Tactful
Competent	Firm	Original	Talented
Concerned	Foresight	Outgoing	Trained
Contagious	Greatly	Outstanding	Uncommon
Creative	Highly	Penetrating	Unique
Dedicated	High-Level	Perceptive	Unusual
Dependable	Honest	Pioneering	Versatile
Diplomatic	Humanizing	Quick	Vigorous
Discrete	Imaginative	Readily	
Diverse	Innovative	Reliable	

Other Appropriate Words to Use

Approaches	Events	Objectives	Relationships
Art	Facts	Operations	Reports
Assignment	Findings	Output	Requirements
Attachment	Fixtures	Performance	Research
Capabilities	Framework	Plan	Resolutions
Catalog	Goals	Policies	Resources
Change	Groups	Precision	Response
Charts	Growth	Presentation	Responsibilities
Communications	Handbook	Principle	Service
Competition	Human Resources	Priorities	Solutions
Conclusions	Ideas	Problem	Sources
Controls	Individuals	Process	Specifications
Cost	Information	Procedures	Standards
Criteria	Innovation	Product	Strategy
Data	Input	Program	Structure
Designs	Investigations	Project	Survey
Duties	Machines	Recommendation	System
Equipment	Manufacturing	Records	Technique
Energy	Materials	Records Management	Variables
Enthusiastic	Methods	Relations	Variety

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

ERIC CLAPTON

Middleville, Idaho
208-555-1640
oldrocker@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE

Sales and Marketing Director for XYZ Co.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Proven experience as sales and marketing professional with extensive and progressively responsible experience with multi-outlet retailers
- Demonstrated ability to motivate sales force and increase annual sales
- Expertise in building strong and lasting business relationships
- Skilled in the development of advertising and sales campaigns and promotions

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant to the Marketing Director (2011 to Present)

Colonial Kitchens Inc. • Boise, Idaho

- Covering operations in three states by managing a staff of 10
- Implemented new marketing techniques by establishing training programs for key staff
- Spearheaded promotional campaign that included yearly contest to name new products
- Used TV/print media to launch successful advertising campaign
- Increased annual sales 30% in all market territories

Sales Director (2007 to 2011)

Pots and Pans Inc. • Meridian, Idaho

- Supervised sales staff in 15 outlets statewide
- Increased sales 22% and profits 9%
- Presented motivational sales training programs to statewide sales team
- Developed and was held accountable for yearly goals for outlet managers
- Staffed trade shows and promotional events

Sales Manager (2005 to 2007)

Nickel and Dime's Department Store • Meridian, Idaho

- Managed hardware and kitchenware departments including supervision of 13 sales personnel
- Ensured suitable display of merchandise on selling floor
- Analyzed marketing trends and ensured availability of best-selling items
- Controlled inventory for two departments
- Directed changeover from manual to computer billing and inventory control

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bachelor of Arts in Marketing

Idaho State University • Idaho Falls, Idaho

Marketing Internship

Acme Inc. • Boise, Idaho

- Increased annual sales and decreased advertising expenditures by developing strategic sales and marketing plan for company

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

BUSTER KEATON

Alameda, California
818-555-6984
keystone@yahoo.com

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Extensive sales and marketing experience with people from all cultures and economic levels
- Consistently surpassed sales quotas in retail clothing and housewares departments
- Demonstrated strong interpersonal and presentation skills
- Proven ability to solve customer issues
- Self-motivated and confident in making independent decisions

RELEVANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sales and Marketing

- Marketed Christmas ornaments and gift items imported from the Philippines by making presentations to over 20 retail storeowners and buyers
- Co-hosted monthly sales seminars for potential real estate partnership investors
- Answered up to 100 customer questions daily regarding project details
- Followed up by phone to verify client's commitment to invest in the partnership
- Raised funds for a nonprofit organization by cold calling local businesses
- Co-led voter drive and personally persuaded 2,000 citizens to sign petition in support of placing community improvement initiative on the ballot

Customer Service

- Gathered information about products, complaints, policies and accounts by phone and in person
- Examined customer claims. Made any corrections or changes to customers' accounts
- Determined charges for services requested. Followed up with customers to ensure satisfaction.
- Provided information on products. Kept records of all transactions
- Referred unresolved complaints to other departments or supervisors
- Applied diplomacy and assertiveness to delivery delays, resolved budget problems
- Interacted with those with cultural and communication barriers

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

<i>Sales Director</i>	PacBell	San Francisco, CA	2010 to 2018
<i>Customer Service Manager</i>	Grothe & Associates	San Francisco, CA	2006 to 2010
<i>Marketing Director</i>	Beneficial Finance	Bay Area, CA	2004 to 2006
<i>New Sales Developer</i>	Microsoft	Bay Area, CA	2002 to 2004

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and Business

Norwest College
Santa Rosa, California

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OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

NAME

City, State

Phone

Email Address

Date

Name of Contact (if known)

Title

Name of Company

Mailing Address

City, State Zip

Dear Mr. / Mrs. / Ms.:

PARAGRAPH 1 -- The Opening/ Your Introduction

1. Give your reason for writing the letter.
2. Tell the employer the position you are interested in.
3. Tell the employer where you found out about the job opening.
4. Tell the employer why you are interested in the company.

PARAGRAPH 2 -- The Body/ Your Hook

1. This is one or two paragraphs that tell the employer why you are qualified.
2. Identify specific qualifications from job posting to address (usually the first three qualifications).
3. Match what you have accomplished to three key qualifications/requirements listed in the job posting.

PARAGRAPH 3 -- The Closing

1. Tell the employer you are interested in interviewing for the available position.
2. Thank the employer for considering you for the position.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

(General)

ERIC CLAPTON

Middleville, Idaho 83700
208-555-1640
oldrocker@gmail.com

March 15, 2018

Mr. Phillip Morework
Production Manager
XYZ Corp.
21 Industry Lane
Anytown, Idaho 83700

Dear Mr. Morework:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my qualifications for **Sales and Marketing Manager** as listed with the Idaho Department of Labor. It was interesting to see you are looking for someone with a high-tech background, worked with a Fortune 100 company and who has had extensive experience in production management.

It would be exciting to work with XYZ Corp. because my current company has been using the quality products you produce for over five years. There is no doubt that my having become accustomed to a fast-paced environment, where deadlines are a priority and handling multiple projects simultaneously is the norm, my production management successes will be an asset to you.

My extensive experience includes:

- Hiring and managing up to 75 staff members.
- Making decisions quickly and effectively.
- Facilitating negotiations with all levels of management and employees.

Please consider my qualifications for this position. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you in the near future. I can be reached at 208-555-1640.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Clapton

Eric Clapton

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

SAMPLE REFERENCE SHEET

ERIC CLAPTON

Middleville, Idaho
208-555-1640
oldrocker@yahoo.com

REFERENCES

PROFESSIONAL

Julia Silvers
Administrative Manager

Colonial Kitchens
123 W. 32nd St.
Boise, Idaho 83703
208-111-2222

Robert Williams
Department Manager

Pots and Pans Inc.
1234 Jefferson Ave.
Meridian, Idaho 83707
208-456-7899

Joseph Mitchell
Director of Marketing

Nickel and Dimes Department Store
12 Wheeling Circle
Meridian, Idaho 83707
208-539-7622

PERSONAL

Joy Smith

1234 East Park
San Francisco, CA 12345
415-456-7899

Jason McMurphey

11 Market St.
Stockton, CA 94546
209-456-7899

RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER GUIDE

SAMPLE SALARY HISTORY SHEET

ERIC CLAPTON

Middleville, Idaho
208-555-1640
oldrocker@yahoo.com

SALARY HISTORY

Colonial Kitchens
123 W. 32nd St.
Boise, Idaho 83703
208-111-2222
Position Range: \$38,500 to \$45,000 plus benefits

Pots and Pans Inc.
1234 Jefferson Ave.
Meridian, Idaho 83707
208-456-7899
Position Range: \$34,750 to \$38,000 no benefits

Nickel and Dimes Department Store
12 Wheeling Circle
Meridian, Idaho 83707
208-539-7622
Position Range: \$29,750 to \$34,000 plus benefits